

March 19, 1974

Dr. Robert Stone  
Director  
National Institutes of Health  
Bethesda, Maryland 20010

Dear Dr. Stone,

I was delighted to hear that Dr. Norman Kretchmer has been under serious consideration for the position of Director of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. Dr. Irving Schulman suggested that it might be appropriate for me to comment on his qualifications.

This is a very easy letter to write, for I can hardly think of anyone more appropriately qualified for that position than Dr. Kretchmer. To an unusual, perhaps unique, degree he combines training, experience, reputation and a high order of performance in every aspect of the challenges that face work in child health and human development. His investigative work is an outstanding example -- or rather considerable set of examples -- of the combination of insightful basic research and its application to important clinical problems. His studies on the maturation of enzyme systems in the newborn infant are the foundation of perinatal medicine today. He has been conscientiously and effectively involved in the health and nutrition problems, especially of children, in the less developed countries. He has built one of the strongest departments of pediatrics -- viewed from an educational, clinical service as well as research viewpoint -- in the country in his work here at Stanford. He approaches the administration of research in the field of child health with a level of informed zeal that could scarcely be matched anywhere. I know he will pursue his duties with great insight and devotion and he will, of course, enjoy the respect of his colleagues throughout the world. In his attachment to the basic ethos of science and of medicine he will undoubtedly be impatient with people of shorter view or of a lower standard of public dedication, but only to the degree that would be justified for any person who took seriously his oath for public service.

I think that on all sides we will be fortunate to have his energies devoted to this important role.

Sincerely yours,

Joshua Lederberg  
Professor of Genetics

JL/rr